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ACTION EAP-00

INFO LOG-00 CIAE-00 FBIE-00 UTED-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00  
NSAE-00 OIC-02 PM-00 P-00 SP-00 SSO-00 SS-00  
PMB-00 PRM-01 DRL-02 SAS-00 /005W  
----- ED94D7 181322Z /45

FM AMEMBASSY HANOI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2918  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
USMISSION GENEVA  
ASEAN COLLECTIVE  
AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY

UNCLAS HANOI 001217

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR EAP, EAP/BCLTV, DRL, PRM, INR  
NSC FOR EAST ASIAN DIRECTORATE  
SECDEF FOR ISA/EAP STERN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM VM HUMANR REFFREE

SUBJECT: A/S KELLY DISCUSSION WITH FM NIEN: REGIONAL ISSUES, BTA, DISSIDENTS

REF: HANOI 1208

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: ON MAY 18, FOLLOWING ARF MEETINGS IN HANOI, ASSISTANT SECRETARY KELLY MET WITH VIETNAMESE FOREIGN MINISTER NIEN AND TOOK THE OCCASION TO VOICE STRONG CONCERNS AT THE REPORTED ARREST ON MAY 17 OF OUTSPOKEN HUE-BASED CATHOLIC PRIEST NGUYEN VAN LY, AND THE REPORTED SUMMONS OF UNIFIED BUDDHIST CHURCH OF VIETNAM MONK THICH QUANG DO TO APPEAR IN A HO CHI MINH CITY COURT ON MAY 18. NIEN NOTED THESE CONCERNS, INDICATING HE WOULD INFORM COMPETENT VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES REGARDING THE U.S. VIEWS. ON OTHER MATTERS, NIEN QUERIED KELLY ABOUT THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY IN THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION, AND SPECIFICALLY THE U.S. STANCE ON CHINA AND RUSSIA. NIEN SPOKE HIGHLY ABOUT THE PROGRESS THE U.S. AND VIETNAM HAVE MADE IN RECENT YEARS AND INDICATED THAT THE RATIFICATION OF THE BTA WOULD BRING THE RELATIONSHIP "TO A NEW LEVEL." HE BRIEFLY REITERATED THE LONGSTANDING VIETNAMESE POSITION THAT THE U.S. IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE `CONSEQUENCES OF WAR', AS HAD VICE FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DINH BIN IN A MORE EXTENSIVE BILATERAL ON MAY 17. NIEN SAID HE LOOKS FORWARD TO THE VISIT TO HANOI OF THE SECRETARY IN LATE JULY FOR SENIOR ASEAN/ARF MEETINGS. END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) ASSISTANT SECRETARY JIM KELLY, ACCCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR PETERSON, DAS BOYCE, EAP/RSP DIRECTOR STROTZ AND OTHERS, MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER NGUYEN DY NIEN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAS DESK DOAN XUAN HUNG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE POLICY PLANNING OFFICE TRAN DUC MAU, AND OTHERS FOR A BRIEF BILATERAL MEETING ON MAY 18. THIS MEETING FOLLOWED A MORE EXTENSIVE BILATERAL UNDERTAKEN THE PREVIOUS AFTERNOON BETWEEN KELLY AND FIRST DEPUTY FOREIGN

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MINISTER NGUYEN DY NIEN, REPORTED SEPTEL.

¶3. (SBU) NIEN, NOTING KELLY WAS THE SENIOR MOST U.S. OFFICIAL TO VISIT HANOI SINCE THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION ASSUMED OFFICE, ASKED ABOUT U.S. POLICIES IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, ESPECIALLY THE U.S. STANCE TOWARDS CHINA AND RUSSIA. KELLY RESPONDED THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION WANTS TO "REACH OUT AND PARTICIPATE" IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND SECRETARY POWELL PROVIDED INSTRUCTIONS THAT HE WAS TO PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE MAJOR SOUTH EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES. HE WAS PLEASED THEREFORE TO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE JUST-CONCLUDED ARF SOM MEETING AND TO HAVE ENGAGED IN DIALOGUE WITH THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN SENIOR OFFICIALS. IN THAT REGARD, HE NOTED THAT FRANK DISCUSSIONS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE MULTILATERALS NOT ONLY OVER MATTERS OF AGREEMENT, BUT ALSO IN AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT.

¶4. (SBU) ON RUSSIA, KELLY NOTED THE PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT

PUTIN WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET AND TALK NOT ONLY AT THE UPCOMING G-8 IN GENOA, BUT ALSO AT ANOTHER LOCATION IN EUROPE IN THE COMING MONTHS. ON CHINA, KELLY SAID HE HAD VISITED BEIJING TWO DAYS EARLIER PURSUING A DIALOGUE WHICH INCLUDED A DISCUSSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HE SAID THE U.S. AND CHINA HAVE MANY ISSUES TO DISCUSS AT BOTH THE HIGH AND WORKING LEVELS BUT THAT HE HOPED THESE CAN BE RESOLVED SOON. ON NORTH KOREA, KELLY MENTIONED THAT SIMILAR TO THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION WILL SEEK TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA. IN THAT REGARD, A REVIEW OF THE NORTH KOREA POLICY IS ALMOST COMPLETE.

15. (SBU) TURNING TO VIETNAM, KELLY INDICATED THE BUSH  
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ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE ITS POLICY OF ENGAGEMENT. IN THAT REGARD, THIS ADMINISTRATION ASKED AMBASSADOR PETERSON TO 'HOLDOVER'. NIEN RESPONDED THAT DURING THE AMBASSADOR'S TENURE IN HANOI, THE TWO COUNTRIES HAD SEEN A NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE NOTED THAT HE HAS HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP. HE POINTED OUT THE EXCELLENT COOPERATIVE WORK OF THE MIA/POW PROGRAM AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE "GOOD RESULTS" WHICH CAN FLOW FROM THE COOPERATIVE EFFORT.

16. (SBU) NIEN SAID THAT THE RELATIONSHIP CAN BE ELEVATED TO "A NEW LEVEL" AS THE U.S.-VIETNAM BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT IS RATIFIED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS. KELLY RESPONDED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS DETERMINED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE AGREEMENT AS IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES. HE NOTED TRADE MATTERS CAN CREATE DOMESTIC TENSIONS; THE PROCESS OF DEALING WITH TRADE ISSUES NEVER WORKS AS EASILY AS WE WOULD LIKE. BUT, HE ADDED, WE HOPE THE PROCESS WILL BE DEALT WITH URGENTLY BY THE CONGRESS.

17. (SBU) KELLY SAID THAT SINCE HE HAD MET WITH VICE FOREIGN MINISTER BIN THE PREVIOUS EVENING A MATTER HAD COME TO HIS ATTENTION WHICH MADE "THE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE RELATIONSHIP MORE DIFFICULT, NOT NECESSARILY FOR THE BTA, BUT IT DOESN'T HELP THE BTA EITHER." HE REFERRED IN PARTICULAR TO THE ARREST ON MAY 17 OF DISSIDENT CATHOLIC PRIEST NGUYEN VAN LY IN HUE FOR VIOLATING THE TERMS OF HIS SURVEILLANCE ORDER AND A SEPARATE INTERROGATION OF UNIFIED BUDDHIST CHURCH OF VIETNAM (UBCV) MONK THICH QUANG DO BY AUTHORITIES IN HO CHI MINH CITY. KELLY SAID HE HOPED THESE PERSONS CAN BE RETURNED TO THEIR RESIDENCES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.  
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18. (SBU) NIEN REPLIED THAT THESE INDIVIDUALS HAD VIOLATED VIETNAMESE LAWS. THE VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WANT TO TAKE THE STEPS IT HAD TAKEN. BUT IT HAD TO DO SO, JUST AS LAWS ARE ENFORCED IN OTHER COUNTRIES. AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID HE WOULD TAKE NOTE OF THESE CONCERNS AND MAKE CERTAIN THEY ARE CONVEYED TO THE COMPETENT VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES.

COMMENT

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19. (SBU) A/S KELLY'S EXPRESSION OF CONCERN OVER THE ARREST OF FATHER LY AND THE SUMMONING OF BUDDHIST MONK THICH QUANG DO FOLLOWED UP THE AMBASSADOR'S SIMILAR POINTS MADE THE PREVIOUS EVENING TO THE MFA'S AMERICAS DESK. (SEE REFTEL) THESE INCIDENTS ARE INDEED TROUBLING. THE U.S. HAS LAID DOWN YET ANOTHER MARKER THAT HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS CAN, UNFORTUNATELY, NEGATIVELY IMPACT THE VERY POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT MOMENTUM IN OTHER AREAS OF THE RELATIONSHIP.  
END COMMENT.

10. (U) A/S KELLY DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THIS MESSAGE BEFORE HE DEPARTED FOR BANGKOK ON MAY 18.

PETERSON